

CITY OF MIAMI SECTION 8 LANDLORD OUTREACH GUIDE



LANDLORD PARTICIPATION

The City of Miami (City) administers a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program through its Department of Community Development (Department) and is funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (USHUD). The program provides rent subsidies to eligible low and very low-income families. The City is committed to fostering partnership with landlords to provide decent, safe and sanitary housing to Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher participant families.

What are the benefits for a participating Landlord?

- **Steady Monthly Cash Flow** -- The rent subsidy or the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) check is mailed directly to the landlord on or about the first of every month. Direct deposits will be offered to landlords in a near future.
- **Less Turnover**- Once Section 8 families that find a good place to live, they tend to stay, which translates to less turnover. As a result, landlords have fewer operating costs and are able to make more of a profit.

How do I become a Section 8 Landlord?

A landlord lists his/her property on the Miami-Dade Housing Central online listing service, a free marketing tool for Miami-Dade property owners. Landlords interested in participating in Section 8 Programs can indicate this when registering their units with the listing service.

Section 8 participants seeking housing are referred to this on-line list to search for a rental unit which meets their needs.

What do I do to list my property?

Landlords may register their rental properties online at housing.miamidade.gov or by calling the Housing Resource Center toll free at 1-877-428-8844.

Landlords are asked to provide the following information:

- Owner name and phone number(s)
- Management agent name, address, phone number
- Date unit will be available
- Number of bedrooms in the unit
- Amenities



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- Rental amount expected
- Handicapped-accessible features
- Willingness to participate in the Section 8 Program.
- Any other information about the property that the landlord deems important or helpful.

SECTION 8 OPERATIONS

How do I find a Section 8 Participant?

The Section 8 participant will contact you at the contact number you provide when listing your property with Miami-Dade Housing Central's online listing service (see above) or through your own marketing efforts. It is up to the landlord to screen potential tenants and make arrangements regarding the amount of rent and security deposit.

What forms/documents are required to lease a unit under the program?

Owners are required to complete the W-9 form and submit copies of the warranty deed, Social Security card and/or Tax ID Number for Corporation, and a copy of their driver's license. They must also fill out the following forms:

- **Request for Tenancy Approval Form (RFTA).** Provides basic information regarding the unit, including its location, size, the rent amount and utilities and appliances provided by the owner. *This form is executed by both owner and prospective tenant.*
- **Unexecuted lease, incorporating a Tenancy Addendum on HUD Form 52641-A.** *Prospective tenant will provide copy of Tenancy Addendum.*
- **Certification of Occupancy Readiness.** Provides landlord's certification that the unit is immediately ready for occupancy without further repairs required of the landlord. *This form is executed by owner only.*
- **Landlord or Authorized Agent Certification.** Provides certification that the landlord will adhere to all federal guidelines and regulations. *This form is executed by owner only.*

What happens after I have selected the prospective tenant(s) and completed the forms?

The above forms/documents must be submitted to the Department. A Section 8 Housing Specialist (HS) starts the approval process and coordinates all documentation through the system.

When are the inspections for Housing Quality Standards (HQS) conducted and rents determined?

The HS requests the HQS inspection once the required documentation is accepted. These inspections are conducted within 72 hours. Once the unit passes inspection, the Department performs a rent survey to determine if the rent is reasonable.

At what point do I know if a Section 8 client is approved to move-in?

Once the unit passes HQS inspection, and the rent reasonableness is determined and accepted by the Real Estate/Survey unit and the landlord, the HS will request that the following documents be executed:

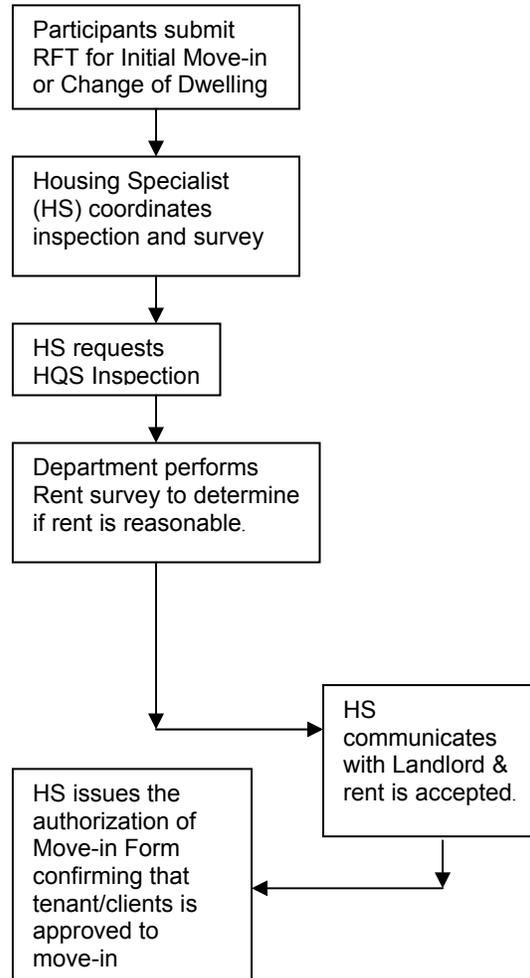
- Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Contract (between Landlord and MDHA)
- Contract Lease (between Landlord and Tenant)

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The HS provides the landlord and tenant with an “Authorization to Move-in Form” confirming that the tenant is approved to move-in.

What are the major steps required for approval?

The following diagram shows the steps required for Section 8 participants to be approved for move-in:



When can we expect my first payment?

Once the landlord is informed of the move-in date, it will take approximately 30-60 days to process the file and issue the first HAP check. These checks will be paid retroactively to the authorized move-in date.



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HQS/INSPECTIONS

Why does my unit have to pass inspection?

United States Housing and Urban Development (USHUD) regulations require the Department to inspect all units to ensure that they are in safe, decent, and sanitary condition in accordance with federal Housing Quality Standards (HQS). No unit is placed under contract until it is inspected and all the necessary repairs are completed.

How many types of inspections are there?

There are three types of HQS inspections performed by MDHA: initial, annual, and complaint.

What is an initial inspection?

The initial inspection is conducted prior to the family moving into a unit or for a change of dwelling. An approval for move-in is not given until the unit passes inspection and the rent survey is conducted.

Who requests the initial inspection?

Once the request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) is accepted by the HS, the HS will schedule an inspection with the Inspection Unit.

What does an HQS inspector look for on an initial inspection?

The inspection focuses on, but is not limited to:

Interior

- Doors
- Ceilings
- Wiring
- Windows
- Flooring
- Smoke alarms
- Bedroom size
- Paint
- Installation of space heaters, water heaters, reverse cycle or central A/C units
- No spacers missing on electrical panel box

Exterior

- Address mandatory on property
- Screens/Cover spaces
- Window Bars
- Paint
- Physical Appearance
- Roofing

What is an annual inspection?

Each unit under contract must be inspected annually, prior to the expiration of the lease. The landlord and tenant will be notified by mail 120 days before the scheduled date of the inspection.

- Conditions presenting an immediate danger or threat to tenant health or safety are considered emergencies and must be corrected within 24 hours of notification. HQS inspectors perform compliance inspection to confirm correction of these conditions within 24 hours of the initial inspection.
- Conditions which do not present an immediate danger to tenants must be corrected within 30 days of written notification. Extensions of time of up to 15 calendar days to correct violation(s) must be requested in writing and are approved on a case by case basis.



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What is considered an emergency situation?

The following items are to be considered “emergencies” and must be corrected within 24 hours:

- Broken locks on first floor window or doors
- Smoking or sparking electrical outlet
- Major plumbing leaks or flooding
- Natural gas leak or fumes
- Electrical situation which could result in shock or fire
- No running water (regardless who’s responsible for the water bill)
- Utilities shut off (regardless who’s responsible for the electric bill)
- Broken glass where someone could get cut
- Obstacle preventing access to unit
- Plugged and overflowing toilet
- Overcrowded family

The inspection reports will note whether needed repairs are tenant’s or the owner’s responsibility. If the unit fails the compliance inspection, the housing assistance payment will be abated regardless of who is charged with the responsibility.

What is a complaint inspection?

These are inspections which develop from complaints, which may be originated from written or oral complaints from the landlord, the tenant/client, neighbors or other agencies (Miami Net, etc.) made to the inspections unit. Complaint violations must be corrected within 30 days for non-emergency conditions. For emergency conditions, violations must be corrected within 24 hours of notification.

RENT REASONABLENESS

How much may I charge for my unit?

The Department’s responsibility is to ensure that rents charged by owners are reasonable in relation to rents currently being charged for comparable units in the private unassisted market. The location, quality, size, unit type, and age of the contract unit as well as any amenities, housing services, maintenance and utilities that are provided by the owner in accordance with the lease are considered. Reasonable rent is a rental amount that is not greater than the rent that is charged for a unit with the same size and amenities in the private market.

How will my rent be determined?

Once the unit passes the HQS inspection, the Department will perform a rent survey to determine the reasonableness of the rent following USHUD guidelines.

How are rents determined?

The following are considered in determining rent:

Types of Housing:

- High-rise (9 + stories)
- Mid-rise (4-8 stories)
- Garden (1–4 stories)
- Townhouse
- Duplex/Triplex/Fourplex
- Single Family Detached

Types of Amenities

- Elevator
- Window AC/RC unit
- Space heater
- Dishwasher
- Central A/C
- Carpeting
- Garbage disposal
- Washer/dryer
- W/D Connections



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What are the sources utilized in determining reasonable rents?

Upon review of the above criteria, a comparison of the unit is made to the high/low rental range in the market for unassisted units. When determining a reasonable rent for a program unit, the unit uses the following sources to evaluate comparable units and reach fair values:

- Multiple Listing Services (MLS) of the local Board of Realtors that handle current rental information in Miami-Dade County and/or Miami-Dade Housing Central's Listing Service.
- Field visits, which gather information on actual market rent when information is not readily available

The HS will notify you of the results of the rent reasonableness analysis and the approved rent amount.

What happens if I don't agree to the rent amount approved?

When a landlord does not agree with the rent amount approved by the Department, the landlord may provide additional information to support the landlord's asking rent (Ex. appraisal, information on other comparable units in the area, etc.).

What are landlords' responsibilities for making their rental units accessible to persons with disabilities?

Federal regulations require landlords to "...permit, at the expense of a handicapped person, reasonable modifications of existing premises, occupied or to be occupied by a handicapped person, if the proposed modifications may be necessary to afford the handicapped person full enjoyment of the premises of a dwelling. In the case of a rental, the landlord may, where it is reasonable to do so, condition permission for a modification on the renter agreeing to restore the interior of the premises to the condition that existed before the modification, reasonable wear and tear excepted." (24 CFR 100.203) Landlords are also required to "...make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services when such accommodations may be necessary to afford a handicapped person equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling unit, including public and common use areas." (24 CFR 100.204).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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